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Summary of the discussion at the regional implementation meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean**

I. Review of issues related to thematic areas

A. A 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns

1. The movement towards sustainable consumption and production in Latin America and the Caribbean involves the multiple challenges of ensuring that the basic needs of a growing population with high poverty rates are met, and of doing so sustainably and with the involvement of the local production sector. It also requires that due consideration be given to the fact that many of the region's economies are strongly based on extractive industries and agriculture. Moving towards sustainable consumption and production requires a rethinking of values and ways of life, for which the rich legacy of the region's indigenous communities can hold important lessons. Climate change poses new challenges for sustainable consumption and production by making it necessary to move towards lower carbon economies and by creating new difficulties in efforts to meet the basic needs (particularly food and water) of the populations it affects. At the regional implementation meeting, the session on sustainable consumption and production was opened with statements by two members of the delegation of Guatemala, followed by a presentation by a representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the links between sustainable consumption and production and green economies.

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** Prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of information provided by Governments, inputs from other international organizations and discussions at the regional implementation meeting held in La Antigua, Guatemala, on 26 and 27 November 2009. The report of the meeting and revised background documents are issued separately.

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Progress and achievements

2. In response to the international commitment to make advances in sustainable consumption and production, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have taken several actions aimed at changing consumption and production patterns, both within their national borders and through subregional and regional collaboration. The Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean instituted the Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production in 2003. The mandate of the Regional Council includes providing specialized assistance on sustainable consumption and production to the Forum of Ministers and to Governments; facilitating the exchange of information and experiences; assessing challenges and obstacles; and identifying sources of international funding and regional cooperation mechanisms. In line with recommendations made by the Regional Council, the Forum of Ministers made sustainable consumption and production a priority under the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development and its regional action plan. Based on the discussions at its meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, in September 2009 and at previous meetings, the Regional Council established priority areas for sustainable consumption and production in the region. A regional proposal for the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production was prepared, as was a regional plan of action based on four subregional plans.

3. According to a recent assessment conducted by UNEP and the Centre for Technology and Industrial Information Management (see document by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Sustainable consumption and production, mining, transport, chemicals and waste management: the results, trends and challenges of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean"), 14 out of the 20 countries surveyed in the region have instituted mechanisms (policies, programmes, projects or plans) to accelerate change towards sustainable consumption and production. Some have also enacted regulations or adopted sectoral assessment procedures based on a life cycle approach for the energy and fuel, sugar, chemicals, construction, electric power, waste management and paper industries and in agribusiness. Some national development plans already incorporate sustainable consumption and production concepts.

4. With the support of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, a number of national cleaner production centres have been established and can claim progress in terms of reduced water and energy consumption, waste generation and emissions.

5. With regard to subregional initiatives:

(a) In 2007, the countries of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) approved a common policy for collaboration on and promotion of sustainable consumption and production, focusing on dialogue and cooperation, consumption and production practices, technological innovation, inclusion of sustainable consumption and production in formal and informal education, capacity-building and information exchange, the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and sustainable procurement;

(b) The Andean Community made sustainable consumption and production a cross-cutting axis of its environmental agenda for 2006-2010. A group of Andean

consumers was created in 2003 to develop a sustainable consumption and production strategy by promoting responsible investments, establishing standards for life cycle assessments of certain products, building capacity and raising awareness;

(c) The Central American Commission on Environment and Development is currently preparing a regional policy on sustainable public procurement. The Central American subregion adopted a regional cleaner production policy for 2005-2010, a Cleaner Production Intersectoral Regional Committee and numerous successful cleaner production projects. An electronic system of waste exchange for Central America and the Caribbean was launched in 2009. The Regional Agro-environmental and Health Strategy incorporates concepts of sustainable consumption and production;

(d) The revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, contains sustainable consumption and production elements, as does the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Challenges and constraints

6. Participants at the regional implementation meeting agreed that consumption patterns in the region were generally unsustainable because the basic needs of large segments of the population were not being met, and as a result of overconsumption by the wealthier segments, driven by a culture that places excessive value on material wealth owing to the influence of corporate policies, mainstream media and advertising. Consumer awareness of the effects of unsustainable consumption and production is limited. All of these factors lead to the consumption of often superfluous products and the frequent renewal of goods, such as motor vehicles and electronic equipment, which contrasts the serious deprivations suffered by most of the population. This situation also creates environmental problems, in particular in waste management, and strains natural resources.

7. Despite the advances mentioned above in the development of policies, programmes, plans and other instruments, as yet these have had few measurable effects in terms of concrete action. This may be partially due to the fact that initiatives have been taken only recently.

8. Climate change may lead to even greater difficulties for the poorest segments of the population in meeting their basic needs, such as water and food, and must be properly taken into account in adaptation plans.

9. One of the main structural characteristics of the region is its heterogeneous industrial base, in which large, often transnational, corporations benefit from financial and technological resources on a par with those of developed countries, while numerous SMEs, which have a significant bearing on jobs and gross domestic product (GDP), have no such resources. Despite advances in the environmental conduct of corporations, their business models are often incompatible with sustainable consumption and production principles, while SMEs often have difficulties implementing environmental regulations and sustainability policies.

Policy options

10. The regional priority areas proposed by the Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production are: national policies and strategies for sustainable consumption and production; support for SMEs; sustainable public procurement; sustainable lifestyles; and the development of an information and knowledge management network. The regional proposal for the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, a summary of which is contained in the ECLAC document mentioned in paragraph 3 above, proposes policy measures related to each of these priorities, as indicated below:

Table
Priority areas for sustainable consumption and production in Latin America and the Caribbean

Priority	*Policy measure*
National policies and strategies for sustainable consumption and production	Mainstream sustainable consumption and production into national development strategies (including development policies, regulations and programmes); strengthen information, education and training on sustainable consumption and production for the population at large; quantify costs and benefits associated with the implementation of sustainable consumption and production in the region and at the national and subregional levels; promote corporate social and environmental responsibility and the concept of extended producer responsibility and life cycle analysis among firms in industrial sectors with high consumption and production levels and significant environmental and social impacts
Support to SMEs	Afford priority, at the subregional level, to sectors that provide environmental services or protect ecosystems; create or strengthen economic mechanisms and instruments that support the sustainability of the production sectors; define specific indicators for sustainable consumption and production within the framework of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development
Sustainable public procurement	Establish high-level political leadership for sustainable public procurement and engage lead organizations; adopt a practical long-term strategy for the transition to sustainable public procurement and identify priority goods and services to commence sustainable public procurement programmes based on nationally agreed environmental and social criteria; ensure the inclusion and sustainability of SMEs in such programmes by establishing specific policy measures and instruments; create a multi-stakeholder mechanism to monitor and evaluate national sustainable public procurement programmes

Priority	Policy measure
Sustainable lifestyles	Apply new or adjusted policies for promoting the supply of sustainable goods and services at affordable prices to the public; integrate education for sustainable consumption into formal and informal educational programmes; conduct behavioural studies and assessments in order to understand the motivations behind the region's consumption patterns
Development of an information and knowledge management network	Strengthen the sustainable consumption and production information network (see www.redpyces.net) as a reference tool for disseminating and sharing information, linking different stakeholders and developing capacities

Source: Prepared on the basis of the recommendations to the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean by the fifth International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production, approved in Cartagena, Colombia, in September 2009.

11. Participants at the regional implementation meeting stressed the need to recover traditional values and lifestyles. Changes in the media and advertising were cited as key factors in achieving sustainable consumption and production. The European experience of regulating advertising during children's programmes was mentioned. Participants also agreed on the need for the State to play a stronger role, including through regulation, education and the buying power of sustainable procurement. Progress towards sustainable consumption and production also requires enhancing participation mechanisms for multiple stakeholders. Participants at the meeting noted the positive experiences associated with the use of advisory boards and other instruments.

12. The policy areas in which it was desirable to promote sustainable consumption and production were: innovation, life cycle and supply-chain approaches to policies on production and land use; strategic environmental assessments; the incorporation of sustainable consumption and production into national development plans; voluntary private sector agreements; energy efficiency and renewability; the promotion of environmentally friendly practices in construction; the need to assess labelling and define labelling criteria in the best interest of the region; the establishment of instruments to enhance the relative profitability of sustainable activities; the expansion of markets for sustainable products; and efforts to ensure that local communities and indigenous groups receive a fair share of the benefits generated by the exploration of resources and traditional knowledge.

B. Mining

13. In many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the mining industry is an important engine of economic activity and accounts for a significant share of GDP and exports.

14. The realities of small-scale, informal mining and large-scale, formal mining are very different in the region. Small-scale, informal mining takes place under precarious environmental, safety and labour conditions and with inadequate technology. Mercury amalgamation, a common practice in informal, small-scale

gold mining, is a health and environmental hazard. Land degradation due to the migratory nature of the activity is also an issue. Large-scale mining has generated substantial fiscal revenues for Governments and, in some countries (and relative to other sectors), has raised environmental and social responsibility standards. However, the nature and scale of operations, together with intensive resource use (in particular water), in a context of often weak legislative and regulatory frameworks, generally results in mining practices that are at odds with sustainability. As rising metal prices have driven an increase in the intensity and geographical scope of mining activity, many environmental and social problems associated with the industry have been exacerbated. This has led civil society and national and local governments to question the net benefits of mining taking into account these environmental and social problems. Mine closures and environmental liabilities are major issues to be addressed.

15. One concern is the extent to which a fair share of the benefits generated by mining are returned to local communities and national economies, in the light of the applicable tax and royalty regimes and because Governments have not been effective in channelling the resources obtained from mining into the development of other, higher-value-added and non-extractive industries.

16. The session on mining at the regional implementation meeting opened with a presentation by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Management of the Ministry of the Environment of Peru.

Progress and achievements

17. Many countries have put in place regulatory and contractual regimes that ensure both stricter oversight of mining standards (including through environmental impact assessment) and greater domestic revenues. The issue of mine closures is on the agenda in many countries and innovative solutions are being developed. Several countries are designing policies to address the environmental liabilities of mining and the remediation of contaminated sites. Over the past few years, Governments have instituted or raised royalties, taxes and other contributions, or have invested directly in mining, through State-owned or mixed companies, thus claiming a larger share of the benefits.

18. The large-scale mining industry is recognized for having pioneered the adoption of some environmental practices in advance of national regulations. Large mining firms regularly publish reports on sustainability and social responsibility, generally in accordance with international guidelines set forth in the Mining and Metals Sector Supplement to the Global Reporting Initiative. Companies have also made progress in efficient water use and are continuing to improve their relations with the communities affected by their activities.

Challenges and constraints

19. Despite the advances made in developing regulatory frameworks, ensuring that mining contributes substantially to local and national long-term development remains a major challenge. Recent experience in several countries in the region shows that even when fiscal instruments are in place, such constraints as weak public management capacities at the local level make it difficult to ensure that mining profits are effectively invested. Many countries still lack the coordinated policy frameworks needed to provide a basis for sustainable mining that reflects

their major thematic priorities. Moreover, national and local governments often find themselves poorly equipped to negotiate with powerful corporations and enforce legislation on issues where public and private interests differ. The social benefits of mining, in particular by foreign companies, are perceived as insignificant when compared with private profits.

20. There is a high rate of informal and illegal activity in small-scale mining in the region. Informal and illegal activities are not necessarily the result of a lack of resources; they are often carried out under the control of powerful landowners and may involve tens of thousands of workers. Cases of quasi-slave labour regimes are known to the authorities. The lack of economic alternatives for these workers is one of the factors driving the continued existence of these enterprises. Activities are undertaken in environmentally sensitive areas, including areas that have been formally recognized as national protected areas. Even within formal mining, participants at the regional implementation meeting reported cases in which companies had failed to comply with commitments agreed upon with the respective Government and other stakeholders as conditions for extracting the resources.

21. Despite the advances mentioned in legislation on mine closure, provisions have not been enforced in many cases, owing to a lack of resources or of clarity with respect to the concrete obligations of mining firms. Environmental liabilities, which are related to the risks generated following the termination of a mining operation, pose a major challenge for Governments in the region. Governments must not only undertake the often costly management of those risks but also cover the costs of the effects that can subsequently materialize, which can be quite severe. Mercury contamination still has a significant effect on the region, in particular the Amazon Basin. Although technical solutions are available and have been adopted in some countries, lack of knowledge and access to these technologies, or their high cost, have hindered the elimination of mercury use.

22. Access to water has been a major source of mining-related conflict. Although the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of the International Labour Organization (ILO) protects the rights of indigenous communities to participate in decisions on projects in their areas, the historical reality and asymmetrical position of these communities in relation to large corporations has impeded their full exercise of this right. Regarding water and other issues, formal venues for stakeholder participation and conflict management are inadequate, and as a result, conflicts are often even exacerbated instead of being prevented or appropriately managed.

23. Many mining companies invest in voluntary initiatives to promote development in the countries and communities in which they operate. Nonetheless, there is concern that these intensely publicized activities may serve only to win community support and thus reduce opposition to their core activities, which produce significant environmental damage and pressure on resources, effects which, in turn, are not fully appreciated by the communities that benefit from such voluntary initiatives. Participants at the regional implementation meeting called for independent assessments of voluntary initiatives and corporate sustainability policies.

24. Climate change adaptation and mitigation pose new challenges to mining. Adaptation has a strong bearing on long-term water availability, and mitigation

relates to the net contribution of greenhouse gases associated with the energy-intensive mining operations.

Policy options

25. One necessary step in managing the resources generated by mining activity is to strengthen the capacities of national, subnational and municipal Governments. Moreover, during the regional implementation meeting, participants expressed the need to articulate a regional position on mining that would establish standards for investor companies and require corporations to make a real commitment to local development rather than marginal contributions to social schemes in their areas of operation.

26. Participants also agreed upon the need to advance towards integrated, eco-efficient, environmental management policies throughout the production process. The consideration of mining and metals by the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management and the project of instituting a global sustainable mining initiative, both led by UNEP, could contribute to advancing sustainability in mining in Latin America and the Caribbean. Initiatives promoted by Governments (including the home-country Governments of major investors), intergovernmental and corporate organizations that promote the reduction of environmental footprints, innovation in waste management, ecosystem risk management, mine closure rehabilitation and other issues may have a positive impact on the sustainability of mining in the region.

27. Participants mentioned the need to implement strategic environmental assessments and stronger zoning and other types of land-use policies, including the establishment of non-mining zones where mining could destroy important or potentially important environmental assets and services and related livelihoods.

28. The importance of engaging multiple stakeholders in decision-making and conflict resolution was also emphasized at the regional implementation meeting. Developing and adopting the ISO 26000 guidelines, due to enter into force in the near future, could help to make the social responsibility efforts of corporations more effective. Despite the complexity of public-private relations in the mining industry, Governments should seek opportunities to collaborate and cooperate with the private sector.

29. The ECLAC document (see para. 3 above) also mentions other types of policies and measures implemented regarding transparency in the handling of information on payments generated by the mining industry, specific regulations (laws, regulations, guidelines) for small-scale mining to enable legal, sustainable and socially responsible practices, effective spillovers into local economies, and policies for addressing the environmental liabilities of mining and for remediating contaminated sites. These policies and measures may serve as references for other countries, including the Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level programme of UNEP.

30. Regarding the use of mercury in gold mining, countries will have to promote the use of alternative substances and establish solid and stable financing mechanisms to do so. International negotiations on a binding regime for mercury, scheduled to begin in Stockholm in June 2010, will be a key factor in addressing

this issue. Countries in the region would benefit from the development of a coordinated regional stance.

31. In terms of climate change, basic steps forward include systematically measuring the carbon footprint and promoting energy efficiency and alternative sources to fossil fuels.

C. Transportation

32. Transportation is a complex industry. It includes passenger and freight transportation by water, air and land (roads and railroads), and combinations of these modes, at the international, regional, national (inter-city and rural-urban) and urban levels. It plays a key role in countries' economic and social development. Effective transportation services and infrastructure are necessary to ensure access to basic goods and services, such as education and health care, and are key issues in trade competitiveness, which in turn affects economic performance. In urban areas, despite some advances, many cities in the region do not have efficient, safe, reliable or accessible urban public transportation systems. There are major sustainability challenges to the expansion of infrastructure, both within and between countries. Transportation in the region is strongly based on fossil fuels and thus generates significant volumes of CO_2 emissions and of particulate material, and is one of the main factors driving the rise in energy demand. Generally, transportation policies and infrastructure development programmes do not take full account of their environmental and social implications.

33. The session on transportation at the regional implementation meeting opened with a presentation by one of the members of the delegation of Guatemala.

Progress and achievements

34. Some of the largest cities in the Latin American and Caribbean region have implemented reforms in public urban transportation, emphasizing intermodality, efficiency and the improvement of passenger services. Some cities have instituted schemes to promote the use of non-motorized vehicles and have invested in networks of urban bicycle pathways. Outside urban areas, a few countries, such as Colombia, with its national logistics policy, have taken steps to develop integrated infrastructure and logistics policies.

35. In terms of fuels and vehicle emissions, the use of leaded gasoline has been eliminated (see section D below). The region has been a leader in the use of alternative fuels. During the regional implementation meeting, participants pointed out that the production of ethanol from sugar cane, in which Brazil has developed expertise over several decades, is based on regionally developed technology that can be implemented locally in many countries, thereby generating jobs and contributing to local economies without affecting food supply. The potential for South-South cooperation in this area was stressed. Participants also mentioned, however, the differences in types of biofuels and in countries' local capabilities of replicating successful biofuel development experiences. The region has benefited significantly from information- and experience-sharing on such global initiatives as the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, which was established in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to help developing countries reduce air pollution through improvements to fuels and vehicles.

36. Improvements have been made in road transportation safety, in some cases through public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder participation.

Challenges and constraints

37. Although the need to support more efficient and cleaner modes of passenger and cargo transportation is generally recognized, contradictory policies are still in place. Advances in the sustainability of transportation in the region have been hindered by decision-making and by institutional structures conceived and established prior to the consolidation of the concept of sustainable development — including Principle 4 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which requires environmental protection to be made an integral part of development processes — and prior to the emergence of climate change as an issue of unequivocal concern on the global agenda. Environmental and social aspects are often not incorporated into transportation policies; moreover, policies on different modes of transportation are frequently separate and uncoordinated, and administrative entities are poorly integrated and connected. Adopting more sustainable transportation models requires strong intra-governmental coordination and support from the State to overcome barriers to the entry of new technologies, methods, management models and professionals.

38. One challenge to improving the quality of fuels is the need to reduce sulphur levels. Of note in this connection is the decision, adopted at the sixteenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to work with regional organizations and collaborators to reduce the sulphur content of fuels.

39. Although the CO_2 emissions of the region represent only a small fraction of developed country emissions, the level of emissions associated with land transport is high compared with income levels, owing largely to the relatively high number of vehicles per person. Increases have been recorded not only in the overall number of vehicles in the region, but also in the number of vehicles per capita. These increases are due to deficiencies in urban public transportation, which make private transportation the option of choice whenever families can afford it, and to an urban expansion model that has emulated the North American model, which is based on the development of new, detached suburbs connected to urban centres by highways. The elevated level of vehicle emissions is also due to a relatively old fleet that lacks adequate maintenance and is lagging on emissions control technology. If current trends continue, emissions from highway transportation in Latin America and the Caribbean will increase markedly in the coming decades. The practice of importing used vehicles from other countries contributes to both pollution and safety problems.

Policy options

40. Economic instruments, such as taxes on fossil fuels, can affect the choice of transportation mode. For such measures to be effective, however, passengers need to be given options. Therefore, the region must invest in secure, safe and reliable urban public transportation; infrastructure for alternative, non-motorized transportation modes; and the integration of transportation policy with urban development and land use policies, with the goal of achieving more sustainable models. Effective, efficient and sustainable urban public transportation requires the active promotion of

co-modality and investment in infrastructure for non-motorized transportation, such as walking and cycling.

41. Progress can be made in reducing motor vehicle pollution by instituting mandatory standards and technical revision procedures for vehicles, regulating imports of used vehicles, establishing fuel standards and controls and developing alternative fuels. Engaging automobile manufacturers in a life cycle approach is also a key aspect of transportation sustainability in the region and requires international cooperation, given the geographic location of automobile manufacturing plants and the fact that most countries are mainly importers.

42. Most importantly, the region must make progress on integrating infrastructure, transportation and logistics policies and, in the process, incorporate the relevant social and environmental variables and ensure consistency with other policy areas, such as energy. This will require major institutional changes and the establishment of coordinating mechanisms and instruments for supporting both public and private sectors in their efforts to break with the established model.

D. Chemicals

43. The production and use of chemicals has significant economic and social benefits. In Latin America and the Caribbean, chemical products are particularly important in agriculture as a means of controlling insect-borne diseases and pests, and as fertilizers. They also play key roles in pharmaceutical production, food production, manufacturing of cleaning and hygiene products, water treatment, construction and many industrial processes. In some countries, the chemical industry plays a large role in the economy. In the absence of appropriate management and monitoring of these substances, however, water, air and soils are susceptible to contamination by toxic chemicals, which entails high social and economic costs. Exposure to contaminants disproportionately affects such vulnerable groups as the poor, women, children and the elderly, and workers regularly exposed to chemical pollution.

44. The session on chemicals at the regional implementation meeting opened with a presentation by the representative of Jamaica. Jamaica holds the chair of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Coordinating Committee of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

Progress and achievements

45. Considerable efforts have been made to prohibit or restrict the use of certain chemicals, in particular pesticides. Use of aldrin and dieldrin is now prohibited and nearly all countries in the region have prohibited the agricultural use of lindane, although some countries still allow its use as a drug. Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) is still used in some countries, under applicable international guidelines, as a component of public health measures to control vector-borne diseases. Initial steps have been taken to control mercury contamination with the development of mercury emissions inventories and the transition to alternative products, in particular in health care. The use of leaded gasoline has been eliminated, and countries in the region have been successful in reducing the use of ozone-depleting substances under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Underpinned by the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes

and their Disposal, coordinated Government action has enabled the dismantling of illegal transboundary shipments of hazardous wastes to the region.

46. The high rates of ratification of international instruments and participation in international initiatives demonstrate recognition of the importance of chemicals management. Most countries in the region have ratified the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Rational management of chemical products was firmly set on the regional agenda in a declaration adopted by the ministers of health and environment of the Americas at Mar del Plata, Argentina, on 17 June 2005. This commitment was reinforced by active participation in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and in sessions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. The Quick Start Programme trust fund has been used to finance projects in 23 countries in the region.

47. Pollutant release and transfer registers are one of the instruments used to produce consistent, integrated data on chemicals. Various national and regional organizations have developed systems within the region to compile and disseminate data on emissions and transfers of toxic chemicals from industrial facilities. Trade agreements have been important drivers of such registers in the region.

48. In the area of transportation of hazardous products, countries in the region have advanced in the implementation of the globally harmonized system of classification and labelling.

Challenges and constraints

49. A number of important issues need to be addressed. Despite the banning of certain pesticides, countries still need to invest in enforcing bans, managing stockpiles of obsolete pesticides and regulating and monitoring pesticide residues in food products. Some parts of the region where persistent toxic substances were produced in the past have critical levels of contamination and the implications for human health in these areas are not yet clear. With regard to heavy metals (see paras. 14 and 30 above), the use of mercury to extract gold remains a problem. Other mercury-related issues include its use in products (for example, hospital products) and industrial processes, storage and management of mercury wastes and management of contaminated sites, as well as its serious health effects on workers. Having eliminated the use of leaded gasoline, countries now need to address other sources of lead poisoning, such as lead in paint. Management of hazardous wastes and levels of accident preparedness are generally inadequate.

50. Illegal transboundary movements of hazardous wastes are known to occur and are sometimes associated with other criminal activities. Rates of reporting under the Basel Convention are low; only one country in the region has ratified the Protocol on Liability and Compensation for Damage resulting from Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and few countries have ratified the Ban Amendment of the Basel Convention. Under the Stockholm Convention, relatively few countries have developed national implementation plans and reporting rates are low. Endosulfan, a chemical used in coffee plantations in the region, is being considered for inclusion under the Stockholm Convention and will require additional policy measures. The implementation of the Rotterdam Convention faces bottlenecks in administrative capacity.

51. Despite advances in pollutant release and transfer registers, most countries in the region do not yet have wide-ranging systems with rigorous and systematic data entry that are capable of providing access to, and sharing of, information. There is still scant knowledge regarding the issues involved in such registers. Moreover, the available technical resources (including training at the national and international levels), financial resources and infrastructure for data collection are inadequate, while the relevant legal frameworks in various countries remain fragmented.

52. Implementation of a globally harmonized system of classification and labelling for sectors other than transportation is in the preliminary stages and is patchy. Participants at the regional implementation meeting expressed concern over the trade-distorting potential arising from uneven implementation of a globally harmonized system.

53. In general, despite the high rates of ratification of international instruments, efforts to establish national policy goals have been hindered by significant barriers to implementation. Although these obstacles are specific to each of the issues being addressed, and in spite of the wide disparities within subregions and countries, they can be grouped into the following broad categories:

(a) Lack of information: Few inventories and registries of contaminants are satisfactorily and systematically maintained. Moreover, few wide-ranging, up-to-date studies have been conducted on the effects of chemical contaminants on human health and the environment. The lack of information on the use and disposal of chemical contaminants makes it difficult to raise sufficient awareness of the costs of contamination and inaction and prevents the issue of chemicals management from becoming a priority on the region's policy agendas. Even when the issue is given the priority it deserves, lack of information remains a barrier to the effective management of such substances and to adequate accident prevention and response. Public access to the relevant information, education and awareness-raising programmes is necessary for the effective participation of civil society in efforts to manage these products;

(b) Poor infrastructure: In almost all countries of the region, infrastructure for hazardous waste disposal is precarious. In addition, few laboratories are equipped for monitoring and technological capacity for developing alternative, accessible products adapted to local needs is lacking;

(c) Lack of trained professionals: This is a major bottleneck throughout the region. Deficiencies exist in the public sector, for example among customs officials, and in the private sector, where the problem is concentrated among SMEs. Regarding the negotiation and implementation of international conventions, often a single person is responsible for several conventions, thereby limiting the country's capacity to negotiate effectively and ensure coordination among Government institutions involved in implementation;

(d) Financial resources: Such resources are scarce, in particular in the aftermath of the global financial crisis;

(e) Insufficient mainstreaming and secondary importance within policy agendas: Chemicals management is generally not a priority among countries in the region. Sound chemicals management policies are poorly integrated with other policy areas, such as health, agriculture and labour. Even within environmental policy, chemical contaminants have been a secondary concern, overshadowed by

such global issues as climate change and biodiversity. Policy measures adopted to mitigate climate change have generated chemical management problems. During the regional implementation meeting, reference was made to a World Bank initiative to promote the substitution of incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescent light bulbs, despite the fact that the latter contain mercury and countries are ill-equipped to dispose of them. The secondary position of the chemicals issue on public agendas is reflected in the scarce financial resources devoted to chemicals management both nationally and internationally, and in the fact that institutions working in this area lack the resources and personnel required to effectively implement legal mandates. UNEP has been supporting efforts to improve mainstreaming, which has also been a condition required by donors.

54. With regard to corporate behaviour, participants at the meeting mentioned that although companies publicize their adherence to principles of product stewardship and extended producer responsibility for the benefit of countries that are primarily importers, producers take little action in this regard. In addition, the policies of exporting countries do not ensure that the end-of-life-cycle concept is applied in the importing country. Specific mention was made of the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) regulation of the European Community.

Policy options

55. Advances in chemicals management require each of these barriers to be addressed. Regional priorities in chemicals management and areas for policy action, including a regional implementation plan for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, will be discussed at the second Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting on the Strategic Approach, to be held in March 2010. In an information paper submitted on behalf of the Regional Coordinating Committee of the Strategic Approach, the regional focal point proposes the following topics for consideration and discussion by countries at the second regional meeting: further engagement of the subregional integration bodies (CARICOM, the Andean Community and MERCOSUR) in the development and implementation of programmes on sound chemicals management; stronger emphasis on the mainstreaming of sound chemicals management into national sustainable development plans and programmes; an increase in the donor base, in particular at the regional level; increased involvement of the relevant regional development agencies, including the Pan American Health Organization, ILO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and ECLAC, in implementation of the Strategic Approach at the national, regional and subregional levels, and in particular in capacity-building activities; and the development of national plans for implementing the Strategic Approach. Countries will also have to assess the implications of the emerging policy issues defined under the Strategic Approach: nanotechnology and manufactured nanomaterials; chemicals in products; electronic waste; and lead in paint.

56. Technical cooperation and funding for chemicals management are crucial. The Quick Start Programme has a limited duration and is restricted to enabling initial capacity-building and implementation activities. New funding sources must be put in place to advance beyond the initial stages of implementation of the Strategic Approach. The donor base needs to be broadened, including through the involvement of national and regional development banks; North-South and South-

South cooperation must be enhanced and regional cooperation should be encouraged and supported; and funding must be ensured for the regional centres for the implementation of the Stockholm and Basel Conventions. Several participants stated their support for the opening of a chemicals window in the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the context of the negotiations on the fifth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.

57. Countries in the region must be prepared for negotiations that will be conducted in the framework of the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in February 2010; and for negotiations on a binding agreement on mercury. In both cases, ensuring adequate funding, under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities will be critical for implementation of the agreements. Participants at the regional implementation meeting requested support to prepare for and attend these negotiations.

58. While participants at the regional implementation meeting called for greater stakeholder involvement in chemicals management, they also cautioned against leaving too much responsibility in the hands of large corporations in the industry, and called for a strengthening of State presence and State regulation. Support is required for SMEs to implement adequate chemical management strategies.

59. Finally, participants raised the issue of adequate remuneration for the benefits of traditional knowledge and for the use of biodiversity in developing chemical products, and emphasized the need to reach a fair and equitable agreement on access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

E. Waste management

60. Although progress has been made over time, waste management remains one of the greatest environmental, health and social challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean. In many areas, major gaps exist in such basic services as waste collection and disposal. Collection is often incomplete or insufficient, and open-pit dumps are common. Even where collection is adequate, disposal is often not. Clandestine dumps continue to be a major problem, with adverse implications for health, pollution, soil degradation and the attractiveness of potential tourist destinations. Although exceptions exist in higher-income areas, in general, local authorities are poorly funded and poorly equipped to cope with the challenges of waste management. In large urban centres, the problem has been aggravated by high rates of population growth without the necessary long-term planning. As seen in section D above, the management of hazardous waste, including obsolete pesticides, is still deficient, and the region remains a destination for trafficking in hazardous wastes. Despite the improvements made in some countries, hospital wastes and other hazardous residues are inadequately managed and often dumped along with household waste. Incineration is the method most widely used to treat hospital wastes, but equipment and procedures are often inadequate.

61. The session on waste at the regional implementation meeting opened with a presentation by the representative of Cuba.

Progress and achievements

62. Significant progress has been made in legislation and public policy on solid waste management and disposal. Awareness of the importance of these issues has increased and has led to progress in various areas, from waste collection and disposal in sanitary landfills to recycling and methane recovery for energy generation. In higher-income areas, where local public resources are sufficient, and particularly where collection services have been privatized, collection is generally adequate. Advances have also been made in the area of industrial waste through new regulations, enforcement measures, environmental recovery programmes and monitoring by authorities and civil society. Many transnational corporations that use standard technologies for waste treatment and recovery and follow international codes of conduct are demonstrating the viability of sustainable practices. In specific industries, such as metals and paper, there is now a high level of recycling, which has itself become a significant economic activity. Co-processing has become more common in the cement industry. Exchange systems for industrial by-products have been established. Some countries have implemented methane recovery projects. The clean development mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol has played a role in the progress made, as has the Methane to Markets Partnership. Although trafficking in hazardous wastes is still a reality, as mentioned above, countries have started to react by launching successful initiatives to dismantle these operations, supported by the Basel Convention (see section D above). Customs officials in several countries are receiving training in this area through the Green Customs Initiative, among other schemes.

Challenges and constraints

63. The region has had some difficulties with the legal and institutional structure for domestic waste management. Waste management, from collection to disposal, is often a legal responsibility of local (municipal) Governments. Depending on the area, this can be a problem for two main reasons. Firstly, municipalities, particularly in lower-income areas, are often poorly resourced. High poverty rates have an impact both on the resources available to municipalities and on the possibility of charging for services. Secondly, much as in the sanitation sector, the fragmentation of waste management along municipal borders hinders economies of scale and the efficient management of waste collection and disposal services. Moreover, regulations on environmental aspects are sometimes obsolete or inadequately enforced.

64. One problem that occurs in areas where waste disposal has been privatized is the perverse incentive embedded in certain concession contract models, whereby companies' remuneration is proportional to the volume of waste, which in effect eliminates incentives to promote reduction at source, recycling and other waste generation reduction measures.

65. With the exception of specific industries, recycling efforts are still sparse. Plastics, in particular, have proven difficult to recycle. Participants at the regional implementation meeting suggested assessing the social costs of the use of plastics, in order to consider possible measures to reduce their use. Participants also referred to the important role, but the precarious social condition, of informal recyclers who earn a living by collecting waste from dumps. Large numbers of people, including children, live on and make their living from dumps.

66. Regarding industrial waste management, although there have been successful cases of public-private partnerships and of active involvement of the industry in waste management, participants at the meeting also reported that companies have actively lobbied and interfered politically with groups of Government officials attempting to promote projects that would have increased corporations' responsibility for their production-related waste.

67. Improvements in the regulation of hazardous waste management have yet to be matched by the necessary infrastructure. Because several countries have only a single hazardous waste treatment plant, waste must be transported over long distances, with the attendant high costs and risks. The region continues to receive illegal shipments of hazardous waste, which is a particularly important issue for the Caribbean island States. Participants reported that countries often import scrap material or used equipment from other regions and that, although these operations are often described by exporters as beneficial to the recipient countries, they in fact generate high costs and risks.

68. The obstacles to methane recovery include the need to find markets for the energy generated in this process, the availability of technology and the need to invest in adequate infrastructure. Producing electricity from waste requires moving from first-generation landfills, which are simply a substitute for open dumps, to second-generation operations, which include bioreactors. Most of the region is still at the first-generation stage. Developed countries are implementing a third-generation approach using sustainable landfills or biocells.

69. Participants referred to the management of waste produced by such extreme weather-related events as hurricanes, the frequency of which tends to increase with climate change. Among the problems mentioned were the large volumes of debris from destroyed buildings and the disposal at sea of bottles containing polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and plastic bags used to store water and other products in hurricane preparation periods. One participant reported the findings of a recent study, supported by the United Nations Development Programme, showing that poor disposal of hazardous wastes, especially in rural areas, was a key factor in the pollution and damage caused by extreme weather-related events.

70. Another issue discussed was the link between waste generation and consumption and production patterns. While the region is largely poor, a significant number of people have access to consumer goods and, as in other parts of the world, consumption patterns include frequent substitutions of equipment in response to producer policies of successively launching new products, thereby rendering fully functional products obsolete within a very short period of time. Participants suggested that both consumer and producer behaviours should be reviewed.

71. The issue of financing was raised as a major challenge in several areas. Participants stressed both the limited financial capacity of Governments in the region and the insufficient funding for waste management provided by international institutions and mechanisms.

Policy options

72. The institutional challenges related to the municipal fragmentation of waste management require coordination and cooperation mechanisms among municipalities, with the involvement of subnational or national entities. At the same

time, institutional capacity-building is necessary at all levels of government and needs to be a continuous process.

73. Innovative models of collection and disposal management, including those that involve the private sector through concession contracts, can be explored, but careful consideration must be given to the inclusion of provisions on the various segments of the waste management chain to avoid such inconsistencies as giving waste disposal companies incentives to receive large volumes of waste.

74. Several participants stressed the importance of, and successful experiences with, education and awareness-raising in regard to waste management. Awareness can contribute both to society's capacity to demand solutions from corporations and Governments and to improvements in domestic behaviour through waste reduction at source and recycling. The potential of such economic instruments as taxes on plastic bags or deposit-return schemes to influence consumer and producer behaviour was mentioned. In regard to consumption and production patterns, participants also referred to efforts being undertaken in the European Union to reduce continual changes of equipment, which could serve as an example for the region.

75. Participants also pointed to a need to involve producers more extensively, through a life cycle approach, and to extend producer responsibility to the waste disposal stage.

76. Regarding trafficking in hazardous wastes, participants stressed the need to enhance entry and exit controls at ports and to provide more training for customs officials. They also called for regional cooperation on this issue.

77. Specific issues were raised regarding the Caribbean island States, such as the need to urgently address waste trafficking and to invest in waste reduction in the light of the small amount of disposal space available, and matters related to the marine pollution generated by extreme weather events, to which these States are particularly vulnerable.

78. Participants called for greater funding from international sources.

II. Interlinkages and cross-cutting issues

79. During the regional implementation meeting, participants highlighted the cross-cutting nature of sustainable consumption and production, but also of chemicals and waste management, which affect both each other and the sustainability of mining and transportation. The broad issue of sustainable consumption and production has the strongest and most obvious interlinkages with the other thematic areas to be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions. Despite the diversity of thematic areas, many common challenges were identified during the meeting and in the preparation of the ECLAC document (see para. 3 above), and are described below.

Information, education and awareness

80. Advances in all of the thematic areas require efforts to produce information and knowledge on the relevant issues, to make that information accessible, to raise

awareness and to train professionals. Investing in the quantification of the costs of environmental and social problems arising either from certain activities, such as mining in some areas, or from inaction, for instance in regard to human exposure to toxic chemicals, is crucial to ensure that these issues are adequately funded and accounted for and mainstreamed into broader policy frameworks.

81. Regarding efforts to move towards sustainability, participants referred to the importance of recovering traditional values and knowledge and of avoiding the replication of foreign models that are incompatible with the region's needs and resources.

Strengthening of State capacities

82. Despite recognition of and support for the role of multiple stakeholders in addressing each of the thematic issues, participants also emphasized the need to strengthen State capacities to monitor, enforce, manage and negotiate with other countries and companies. Many countries are still suffering the effects, at the national, subnational and municipal levels, of the contraction and weakening of the State apparatus over the past decades.

Potential for public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder involvement

83. Public-private cooperation is key to advancing towards sustainable development. Such partnerships are crucial in translating policy goals and legal provisions into concrete action; in the transfer of technology; in the development of productive linkages between extractive activities and local economies; and in ensuring financing for critical issues related to corporate activity, among others. Countries and representatives of major groups at the regional implementation meeting stressed the potential role of such groups in supporting efforts by States to move towards sustainable development. Participants stressed, however, that the State has a unique role in which it cannot be replaced by non-State actors.

Potential for regional cooperation

84. Countries can benefit from different forms of regional cooperation in pursuit of the various policy goals falling within the scope of the thematic areas to be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions. Among others, these may include (and in some cases have already included) regional articulation in international negotiations and the consolidation of common positions on issues of common concern; the exchange of successful experiences in achieving similar policy goals; the adoption of common standards to avoid any distorting effects of policy measures on investment or trade; and common policies for the integration of infrastructure under the concept of sustainability. The increasing importance of South-South cooperation was also emphasized.

Need for a subregional approach

85. The Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirmed, as at previous regional implementation meetings, that it was important to take a subregional approach to the issues on the agenda, considering the diversity of the Caribbean, South America, Central America and Mexico. Whereas diversity exists within these groupings as well, a subregional approach will

be useful in exploring issues of common interest to groups of countries, while taking due consideration of the concerns and challenges of smaller countries.

Cooperation, financing and technology transfer

86. Cooperation, financing and technology transfer are key issues in efforts to ensure that policy goals and internationally agreed commitments are translated into effective action. The absence of adequate technology is often a major factor impeding the efficient and environmentally safe use of resources. Cooperation in this regard is crucial, provided that the specificities of local circumstances are taken into account. To the extent possible, incentives for the generation of local technological capacity should be offered so that solutions match local needs. Financing is a major issue in advancing towards sustainability in all of the thematic areas to be covered by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions. In many cases, international commitments have been undertaken and national policy goals have been established accordingly, but without the necessary funding to ensure implementation. At upcoming international negotiations on new issues, such as the internationally binding agreement on mercury, or on those already on the international agenda, such as climate change, efforts must be made to ensure that financial resources match commitments, under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The negotiations for the fifth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund must consider the increasing demands being placed on the countries of the region.